Images © 2007 Stefanie Felix

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Strategic Plan for 2009-2013

Washington State
Department of Social & Health Services

ODHH Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Eric Raff, Director
July 2008

Department of Social and Health Services
Robin Arnold-Williams, Secretary

Secretary's Office
Blake Chard, Deputy Secretary

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Eric Raff, Director

A Strategic Plan for 2009-2013
This strategic plan communicates how we will advance our mission and vision, so that we can better serve the deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled populations in Washington State. Future strategies will remove barriers to equal access opportunities to programs, services, activities and telecommunications.

Acknowledgements
Special thanks to the people who contributed to the development of the strategic plan:

ODHH Staff
ODHH Advisory Committee
Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Stakeholders
Blake Chard; Deputy Secretary
Chris Trujillo; DSHS Strategic Plan Lead

For more information about this document please contact Eric Raff, Director at 360-753-0699 (TTY) or by email at rafferic@dshs.wa.gov

Table of Contents
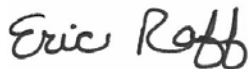
Executive Summary

Dear Friends of ODHH,

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 is an evolving roadmap of our strategy to provide equal access opportunities and remove barriers we face everyday. The Strategic Plan describes our services, the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind people and their needs, what we are doing to meet their needs, the environment we operate in, our goals, objectives and strategies for the next five years and assessments of our performance and internal capacity to achieve the strategies.

The strategic plan shows how we align our goals within the framework of ODHH legal mandates, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Goals and the State of Washington Priorities of Government (POG). It requires us to prioritize our strategies and manage our limited resources to achieve them. Government Management Accountability Performance (GMAP) will define the performance measures by which ODHH will be judged on how we are doing. The GMAP process will hold us accountable to make sure that we are using the limited budget and resources wisely to produce positive results. The Strategic Plan is only a one piece to a puzzle, when put together, tells the story of how ODHH is doing.

This strategic plan does not attempt to propose solutions to every barrier faced by our communities. Some identified needs or issues will be included within the daily operations of our existing programs and services, while others are beyond the scope of our authority or resources.

It has been five years since I've joined ODHH and upon reflection, I would like to thank the staff and stakeholders for the many accomplishments, milestones and awards ODHH has been blessed with. It gives me great confidence that we are making good progress and inspire me to look forward to the future. Given the enormity of the opportunities and challenges in the next five years, greater collaborative partnerships and public support will help ODHH face them. Please join me, the ODHH team and our partners to take ownership of this Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 and fulfill the ODHH mission to make our collective vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Eric Raff

Eric Raff
ODHH Director

Chapter 1 • Our Guiding Directions

MISSION

The mission of ODHH is to remove barriers for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled.   We will provide resources allowing these people to have equal access and effective communication.

VISION

Our vision is an accessible Washington where people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled enjoy self-sufficiency.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following are the guiding principles that reflect ODHH values and philosophy in how we operate and conduct our business. ODHH shall:
- have compassion for clients
- empower clients to achieve independence
- seek equal access opportunities
- appreciate diversity
- respect communication choices
- be open and accessible
- be accountable to the public
- encourage collaborative partnerships

PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT

The State of Washington Priorities of Government (POG) approach creates a strategic framework for budget decisions by identifying ten statewide priorities. DSHS has established eleven goals that are aligned with four statewide priorities (POG).   ODHH has established three goals that are closely aligned with the DSHS goal to increase employment and self-sufficiency* and uses the remaining four of DSHS goals. These goals are aligned with two statewide priorities (POG).

Priorities of Government	DSHS Goals
4. Improve the security of Washington's vulnerable children and adults	E. Increase employment and self-sufficiency
10. Strengthen Government's ability to achieve results efficiently and effectively	H. Reinforce strong management to increase public trust
	I. Strengthen data-driven decision making
	J. Value and develop employees
	K. Improve internal and external partnerships

*DSHS Goal:	**E.**	**Increase employment and self-sufficiency**
ODHH Goals:	A.	Remove barriers to equal access opportunities to telecommunications
	B.	Remove barriers to equal access opportunities to DSHS Services
	C.	Remove barriers to equal access opportunities to employment, government, businesses, non-profit organizations and the public

United States of America (Federal)

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in services offered by government and businesses and to provide equal employment opportunities, as well as the provision of telecommunications relay services.

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 mandates reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to allow full access to and participation in public and private programs and services receiving federal funds.

- Telecommunication Act of 1996, as amended, Section 225 mandates that telecommunications service providers and manufacturers ensure that their services and products are usable to the greatest extent possible by persons with disabilities.

Revised Code of Washington (Washington State)

- RCW 43.20(A).720, et.seq. authorizes the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to administer and fund for the provision of telecommunication relay services and distribution of specialized telecommunication equipment.   If funding is available, it allows for the provision of reasonable accommodations on behalf of DSHS.

- RCW 43.19.190 authorizes DSHS to purchase sign language interpreter services on behalf of people with hearing loss who are clients of public assistance. The Office of the Secretary has delegated this authority to the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

- RCW 49.60 mandates the provision of reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities in places of employment, government and businesses.

- RCW 2.42.170 authorizes the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to work with the Administrator of the Courts (AOC) to establish courtroom interpreting standards and rates.

Washington Administrative Code

- WAC 388-43-001, et.seq. authorizes the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to provide social and human services through contracts with regional service centers serving the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind.

Chapter 2 • The People We Serve

INTRODUCTION

There are people with hearing loss within the general population regardless of age, ethnicity, religion or income. "People with hearing loss" is generally used as a broad term to describe all people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind who have different communication needs. Sometimes it is referenced as the "invisible disability" because hearing loss is not obvious and is widely misunderstood by the society at large. There are approximately 506,000 individuals with a hearing loss in Washington, including 12,600 individuals who are deaf. Washington State has a large deaf-blind population.

- **About People with Hearing Loss**

People who are deaf tend to have permanent hearing loss with little or no residual hearing, which affects verbal and auditory capabilities. Generally, people who are deaf are unable to receive spoken language without use of auxiliary aids. They may communicate through a preferred communication method to express themselves and use services or technology to receive spoken language.

Deaf (Capital "D") people identify themselves as members of a Deaf community and culture and prefer using American Sign Language (ASL). These individuals share common experiences, traditions, norms and values.

Deaf-**B**lind **(DB)** people are either deaf or hard of hearing and have some degree of vision loss or is blind. Generally, people who are **D**eaf *and* **B**lind use uppercase "**DB**" as a cultural term recognizing ASL as their primary language and identifying themselves as members of a Deaf and/or Deaf-Blind community and culture. Some deaf-blind people who are hard of hearing, are not members of the community, and use other auxiliary aids to communicate.

People who are hard of hearing have some degree of hearing loss with some residual hearing, either permanent or fluctuating, which affects communication. Generally, people who are hard of hearing are able to express or speak for themselves and may or may not use auxiliary aids to receive or understand spoken language. They may communicate through auditory means, with or without amplification, and may or may not have the ability to lip-read. Few know sign language; and if they do, it is not usually their primary mode of communication.

People with speech disabilities can be any person with an expressive communication impairment who has difficulty with or who is unable to communicate vocally in one or more environments. Most of them can usually hear.

- **Communication Preferences**

There are various communication approaches preferred by individuals with hearing loss. Generally, deaf and deaf-blind people communicate in signs. Communication approaches using signs include American Sign Language (ASL), Pidgin Sign English (PSE), and Signed Exact English (SEE). Only American Sign Language is recognized as a language with its' own grammar and structure. Other signing systems are based on the spoken English language. Generally, deaf-blind people depending on vision loss and preferences may communicate by using tactile signing or close vision signing. They may or may not know Braille. Generally, hard of hearing and speech disabled people communicate through spoken language. Hard of hearing and some deaf people use oral communication with lip-reading skills. Despite a population's common usage of a particular communication approach, communication preferences are very individualized.

- **Barriers to Effective Communication**

Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled individuals face communication barriers on a daily basis. Obstacles and barriers occur throughout the private, public and nonprofit sectors. Barriers to obtain services and products in society continue and reduce the quality of life.   Such services in society include: healthcare, education, mental health, substance abuse, employment, legal, financial, housing, insurance transportation, recreation and many more.

Individuals living in rural areas face greater accessibility barriers to service delivery systems due to lack of qualified professionals and resources.   Individuals of ethnic background including African-American, Native Americans and Asian-Americans have been grossly underserved as they may not be aware of the resources available to them.

- **Accommodations to Remove the Barriers**

Employers, state & local governments, businesses and service providers, and telecommunication providers must provide equal access opportunities to people with hearing loss or people with speech disabilities so they may participate in or benefit from programs, services, or activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To participate or benefit, their needs for effective communication must be met.   Organizations and agencies must provide reasonable accommodations and make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services where reasonably necessary to provide effective communication.
The individual's communication preference must be considered with the provision of auxiliary aids to provide equal access opportunities.

The term "accommodation" means modification or adjustment to a policy, practice, or procedure that enables a qualified individual with hearing loss or who is speech disabled to enjoy equal access opportunity to effective communication. The term "auxiliary aids" include a wide range of services and devices that ensures effective communication.   The type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication will vary according to the length and complexity of the communication involved.

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing include the following: qualified interpreters, note takers, Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) better known as real-time captioning, written materials, hearing aid-compatible amplified telephones, assistive listening systems, closed caption decoders, open and closed captioning, telecommunications devices for the deaf (TTY/TDD), other specialized telecommunication equipment, videotext displays, and service animals.

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who have both vision loss and hearing loss include the following: qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, visual magnification devices, Braille or large print materials, assistance in locating items and service animals.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

ODHH provides seven programs offering various services to the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind populations throughout Washington State. Services include providing telecommunication relay services, distribution of specialized telecommunication equipment, advocacy through case management, videophone communications via an infrastructure of videoconferencing sites, providing information & referral, conducting outreach & training activities, and providing sign language interpreters and other reasonable accommodations.

ODHH has different programs and services designed to meet the particular communication needs of people with hearing loss.   For instance, the Telecommunication Relay Service and Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program serves all individuals with hearing loss and/or speech disabilities.   The social and human services provided through the regional service centers' caseloads comprise mostly of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing but not necessarily people with speech disabilities.

- **Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS)**

The Telecommunication Relay Service eliminates barriers to the telecommunication network, providing equal access opportunities to the telephone as a person with normal hearing and clear speech would. Telephone calls to persons with normal hearing are typically done through a communication assistant who makes the telephone conversation process easier. A contract with a telecommunication relay provider provides various relay features to accommodate the consumer's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method.

- **Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED)**

Per regulations, eligible clients apply to receive specialized telecommunication equipment and receive training to effectively use the equipment. Specialized telecommunication equipment distributed matches the client's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method. The equipment makes possible the client to access the telecommunication relay services and/or to make direct telephone calls with other parties.

- **Social and Human Services (SHS)**

Contracts with several Regional Service Centers on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing throughout the state allow for the provision of human services. Historically, ODHH has been contracting with some of these centers since 1980s. Currently the scope of services includes: information and referral, education and training, technical assistance, outreach, assistive technology loan & referral and case management. Case management is about providing assistance or advocacy on the client's behalf to remove communication barriers to products, services and employment in the private, public and nonprofit sectors.

- **Sign Language Interpreter Management (SLIM)**

A statewide contract is available for agencies to purchase interpreter services on behalf of clients, employees or customers with hearing loss. This program manages the contract; to improve the delivery of sign language interpreter services. Technical assistance and consultation is available to agencies lacking the expertise to arrange interpreter services. The provision of sign language interpreters fulfills the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to DSHS agencies, programs and services.

- **Communication Access Network (CAN)**

It is an ongoing telecommunication network of videoconferencing sites being established throughout Washington State within DSHS agencies and the regional service centers. Each site includes a workstation utilizing the latest videoconferencing technologies. The functionality of these sites will be developed to include access to video relay services, video remote interpreting, remote real-time captioning and face-to-face communications. Technical assistance and training activities are provided to DSHS agencies and DSHS clients.

- **Assistive Communication Technology (ACT)**

This program benefits people who are either hard of hearing or deaf-blind. The program aims to implement and integrate a DSHS-wide referral & loan system to provide auxiliary aids (e.g. assistive listening systems, real-time captioning and other assistive technology). The provision of auxiliary aids will fulfill the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to DSHS agencies, programs and services.

- **Information and Referral, Advocacy (IRA)**

Deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals, families, professionals and the general public may not know where to obtain specific information about specialized programs and services related to hearing loss. ODHH respond to such requests for information, resources and/or referrals. Advocacy on behalf of individuals will continue to be the responsibility of the regional service centers. The role of the ODHH is to advocate for system change through revised regulations, policies and contracted services.

Occasionally, ODHH may be requested to assist individuals needing access to a state government program or service.

Outreach and training activities are intended for audiences of professionals, organizations, and deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind communities. Examples of outreach and training activities are diversity initiatives, exhibits at events and conferences, distribution of publications, giving presentations and training on use of assistive technology. Outreach activities heighten the public awareness of ODHH programs, deaf culture, and other issues related to hearing loss. Training activities introduce sensitivity awareness or cultural competency concepts with the knowledge and skills to DSHS staff to effectively serve the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals.

Chapter 3 • Appraisal of External Environment

POTENTIAL CHANGES IN ECONOMY THAT CAN AFFECT CLIENTS' NEEDS

The current economic climate of home foreclosures, rising costs of food & gas and other indicators have an impact on people with hearing loss or speech disabilities just as it does with everyone. Clients' needs for government benefits and assistance are likely to be greater than before. With increasing costs, the assumption is employers and businesses may be more reluctance to provide accommodations. While the employment rate is not as severe in Washington, people with hearing loss continue to be unemployed at higher rates or underemployed with unrealized potential. The increasing median home prices or apartment rent in King County have already started a new trend of deaf individual moving to Snohomish, Pierce or Thurston counties. The cost of living increases may result in deaf and hard of hearing inability to afford monthly broadband charges, a crucial point of access to internet-based telecommunication relay services.

TRENDS IN DEMOGRAPHIC AND CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS

There is an increasing number of the aging of Baby Boom Generation with progressive hearing loss. According to the National Center for Disease Control, 40% of people over 65 and 80% of people over 85 have hearing loss. The growing use of MP3 players and IPod players by youth leads to early progressive hearing loss. Large numbers of returning veterans from Afghanistan & Iraq wars not only suffer post stress traumatic syndrome (PSTD) but hearing damage as well. Aging boomers, youth and war veterans would need resources to coping strategies. Late-deafened and hard of hearing adults and deaf children are obtaining cochlear implants, a surgical procedure to enhance auditory reception. Deaf children with cochlear implants are becoming prevalent, particularly in Spokane. As these children reach adulthood, the impact on demands for ODHH programs and services remains to be seen. Another trend is the increasing number of deaf K-12 students in a mainstream environment who have an inadequate and fragmented system of support services and insufficient numbers of qualified teachers of the deaf and educational interpreters. The Tacoma office of the Regional Service Center is observing a caseload increase of hard of hearing clients. These future generations of new customers are likely to have needs and issues different from the customers presently served by ODHH.

ACTIVITIES THAT LINK TO MAJOR PARTNERS

<u>**State of Washington Government Agencies**</u>
ODHH is currently partnering or will be pursuing partnership opportunities with several departments and agencies:

Department of Health (DOH) – ODHH continues to collaborate with the Genetics Services Section, Early Hearing loss Detection, Diagnosis and Intervention (EDHHI). EDHHI administers the voluntary reporting by hospitals of newborn hearing and screening testing results. ODHH supported the planning efforts of EDHHI Summit to close the gaps between newborn testing and early intervention.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) / Washington Sensory Disabilities Services (WSDS) – WSDS provides technical assistance to school districts including teachers of the deaf, educational interpreters, administrators and parents. During 2008, ODHH collaborated with WSDS and Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) to close the gap between regional service centers for the deaf and hard of hearing and early intervention providers.

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) – ODHH is a permanent associate member on the GCDE board. ODHH will work with GCDE to revise its publication, "Communicating with Persons Who Have Hearing, Speech, Vision or Cognitive Disabilities."

Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) – ODHH is partnering with both WSD and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to have its employees participate in the assessment of their sign language proficiency to evaluate their eligibility for assignment pay: dual language.

Department of General Administration (GA) – ODHH is the DSHS lead agency to administer the sign language interpreter services contract on behalf of the State of Washington. The contract is available to state agencies by participating in the GA- administered Washington State Purchasing Cooperative (WSPC). ODHH is also a representative on the GA State Facilities Architectural Access Committee (SFAAC). The committee meets monthly to review architectural plans for remodeling state offices and ensuring that new construction for lease by state agencies meets all federal and state accessibility standards. Membership of the SFAAC comprises of several state agencies and various disability groups. ODHH represents accessibility issues for persons with hearing loss.

Military Department / Office of Emergency Management (OEM) - ODHH used to contract with the E-911 Emergency Access Program, currently operated under the auspices of the Hearing and Speech Deafness Center. This program provides training to Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) professionals on how to receive and handle calls from TTY users. OEM administers 911 call centers and now funds the E-911 Emergency Access Program. ODHH is collaborating with OEM on ensuring that the WA State Homeland emergency management plan addresses access to disaster-related activities (e.g. emergency notification, evacuation, etc.) prompted by terrorism, environmental or natural disaster events.

Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) - ODHH will pursue a partnership opportunity with both DSB and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to reestablish the defunct Deaf-Blind Task Force addressing deaf-blind issues.

Office of the Administrators for the Courts (OAC) – ODHH will be working with the newly created Access Coordinator position when it is filled. ODHH intend to partner with the AOC Access Coordinator to develop court interpreting standards and rates.

Other Departments –ODHH has an ongoing working relationship with the following departments and agencies:

- Office of Financial Management (OFM)
- Department of Revenue (DOR)
- Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC)
- Department of Information Services (DIS) / Information Services Board (ISB)

Department of Social and Health Services

ODHH makes an effort to work with DSHS administrations, divisions and programs to ensure administrative policies applicable to hearing loss issues are updated and in compliance. ODHH offers free technical assistance, assistive technology training and deaf awareness presentations to any DSHS agency that requests it.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) - ODHH is partnering with both DVR and Washington School for the Deaf to have its employees participate in the assessment of their sign language proficiency to evaluate their eligibility for assignment pay: dual language. ODHH is currently offering operational and technical assistance to established DVR videoconferencing workstations throughout local DVR offices. ODHH was instrumental in DVR reestablishment of the Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf (SCD), a position that works with Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) in the field offices ODHH will be exploring partnership opportunities with both DVR and Department of Services for the Blind to reestablish the defunct Deaf-Blind Task Force addressing deaf-blind issues.

Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA) – Within ADSA Division of Developmental Disabilities is the Infant-Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP). ODHH was a member of the ITEIP Early Intervention for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children advisory council which developed early intervention standards and a brochure for parents. During 2008, ODHH collaborated with ITEIP and Washington Sensory Disability Services to close the gap between regional service centers for the deaf and hard of hearing and early intervention providers. ODHH is a partner identified in the state interagency agreement to coordinate and implement a statewide system of early intervention services. ODHH will continue to work with ITEIP to ensure the needs of deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers are addressed.

Regional Service Centers

ODHH has client services contracts with four non-profit organizations to provide statewide social and human services.   ODHH meets quarterly with the executive directors of the regional service centers on the deaf and hard of hearing.   The agenda typically revolves around ODHH-Center contractual relationship on programmatic issues and gaps of services, and areas of coordination and efficiency. ODHH attends the centers' annual board of directors meetings to understand stakeholder expectations of the centers. The regional service centers and their facilities are located as follows:

Hearing and Speech Deafness Center	Bellingham
Hearing and Speech Deafness Center	Seattle
Hearing and Speech Deafness Center	Tacoma
Eastern Washington Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Spokane
Southeastern Washington Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Vancouver
Southwestern Washington Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Pasco
Southwestern Washington Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Yakima

National Organizations and Associations

As a member of national organizations and associations, ODHH can monitor trends in the telecommunication and human services delivery systems within the government, nonprofit and business sectors. Such memberships allow greater exchange of information regarding state-by-state comparison of statutes, regulations, policies and other relevant programmatic areas via electronic distribution lists and conferences.

ODHH is a member of national associations including the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Hearing Loss Association of America (HLA), American Association of the Deaf Blind (AADB), Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Telecommunications for the Deaf (TDI), National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA), and Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program Administrators (TEDPA), Speech to Text Services Network (STSN) among others.

State-Wide Organizations and Associations

ODHH is a member of several statewide organizations and associations including the Washington State Association of the Deaf (WSAD), Hearing Loss Association of Washington (HLA-WA), Washington State Deaf Blind Citizens (WSDBC), Washington State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (WSRID) and Washington State Hands and Voices (WA-H&V). Presidents of these organizations represent on the ODHH advisory committee. Memberships and attending their conferences and meetings allow ODHH to gather stakeholder expectations of ODHH and pursue partnership opportunities.

Regional and Local Organizations, Associations and Service Providers

ODHH maintains a presence at several regional and local organizational events such as meetings, socials, workshops held by the regional and local organizations.   This presence makes possible ODHH to monitor trends in demographic and customer characteristics as well as gather stakeholder expectations of ODHH.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

ODHH Advisory Committee – Membership of the advisory committee include deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled individuals living throughout the state, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and presidents or representatives of the statewide organizations and associations.   All meetings are open to the public.   Several meetings with strategic plan discussions on the agendas were held at the following locations and dates:

Location	Date	Attendees*
Spokane	September 15, 2007	16
Vancouver	November 17, 2007	10
Sea-Tac	March 29, 2008	23
Bellingham	June 14, 2008	21

* The numbers of attendees include advisory committee members and visitors.

ODHH Staff – Staff had a 2-day event focusing on organizational and workforce capacity as well as strategic planning. The meetings identified strategic priorities and issues to be addressed. Staff provided input on future strategies and performance measures as well as components of the plan.

Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Stakeholders - ODHH hosted two (2) three-hour town hall meetings that are open to the public. The meetings opened with a brief agency overview and then breakout sessions focusing on deaf, hard of hearing and other populations discussing community trends, needs and barriers. The second round of breakout sessions focused on recommending strategies and priorities for the following topics:

- Telecommunications
- Sign Language Interpreting
- Social and Human Services
- Reasonable Accommodations

Participants at the town hall meetings assessed issues and priorities, raising concerns and provided feedback. The 3 hour town hall meetings were held at the following locations and dates:

Location	Date	Attendees
Yakima	November 3, 2007	64
Seattle	December 8, 2007	23

ODHH received many comments and suggestions. While it is not realistically possible to address every unmet need, ODHH has incorporated those suggestions where it fits within its' existing mandate, budget and resources.

The strategic plan was written by the ODHH Director, which was reviewed and commented upon by the ODHH advisory committee, ODHH staff, and the DSHS Deputy Secretary. This final Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 was submitted to DSHS and Office of Financial Management on July 2008. However, strategic thinking, planning and implementation will be an ongoing process over the years to come.

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Telecommunication Trends - The telecommunication industry is rapid changes that it becomes a challenge to monitor these national trends. ODHH is a small agency with limited in-house expertise and resources. ODHH exchange information with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Department of Revenue (DOR) to assist in the assessments of these trends and the implications.

Telecommunications is becoming a challenge as the distinction between cable providers, telephone companies, Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) providers, and utility companies providing broadband or internet services over telephone, cable, fiber optics and electrical power lines is blurry. It is a challenge to distinguish between information services versus telecommunication services and whether the various approaches should be subject to regulation and taxation.

The telephone subscribers' switching from landline telephones to wireless telephones (cellular) presents an impact on revenue as ODHH does not have excise tax collection authority for wireless telephones. In Washington State, for the first time during fiscal year 2006, the number of wireless lines has exceeded the number of telephone landlines.

Emerging technology such as Voice-Over Internet Protocol telephony (VOIP) utilized by corporations and government also presents a serious risk to the revenue stream. The infrastructure for landlines consists of Public Box Switches (PBX). With PBXs, a single line goes into a PBX and is split into many lines as extensions. The switchover from PBXs to VOIP would have a drastic impact on the revenue stream. For instance, a building may have a PBX with 130 "landlines" on which excise taxes are collected. If the company owning the building switches from PBX to VOIP, the number of "landlines" could potentially be reduced to 37.

Wi-Fi make possible wireless access but coverage is limited to a building or within a street block. However with implementation of Wi-Max beginning in 2009, coverage could be expanded to an entire

city! Wi-MAX is a wireless industry coalition whose members organized to advance IEEE 802.16 standards for broadband wireless access (BWA) networks.   Wi-Max will have an impact on the future of relay services and specialized equipment.

Internet-based Relay Services and New Telecommunication Equipment Technology – Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a new relay platform: internet-based relay services. Relay calls can be made from a computer, videophone or pager. Relay calls can be made via wireless, landline, DSL or broadband connections.   There are three main types of internet-based relay services including Video Relay Services (VRS), Internet Protocol Relay (IP Relay) and IP Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS). Wi-Max could expand the use of these relay services on a national level including rural areas like Eastern Washington. It seems to be the trend that the TRS industry is shifting toward wireless relay services.   Relay providers are building and releasing new products to take advantage of wireless and Wi-Max capabilities.   These include:

- Portable Wireless VP - Two new portable wireless videophones have been introduced so far this year (2008) and a third one is anticipated this Fall 2008.

- VRS on Pager Devices - This is a new emerging 3G technology to communicate via video and remotely connect from one wireless device to another. This was demonstrated at a technology event and is a promising product that may be on the market sometime in 2009 or 2010.

ODHH has a unique project to make sure the deaf-blind are not left behind with these new technologies. It has been recognized and anticipated nationally:

- Deaf-Blind Communicator - The Deaf Blind Communicator is a new telecommunication product that includes wireless capabilities and portability for the deaf-blind population. This is a product whose features will permit the deaf-blind person to process relay calls almost anywhere in the country.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) – The FCC oversees Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act.   Title IV mandates the requirement to provide telecommunication relay services on the states and telecommunication providers. The intent is to ensure that people with hearing loss and speech disabilities achieve "functionally equivalent" access to telecommunication services. The FCC often establishes administrative rules and new requirements that impact the states' capacity to comply with additional costs to implement.   With anticipation of these rulings, ODHH and the Office of Financial Management have agreed to set aside $900k in reserves.   The following FCC actions have been recent:

- TRS, VoIP and E911 - VoIP providers were given an extension until March 31, 2009 to route 711-dialed calls to an appropriate relay center. TRS providers were also given an extension until March 31, 2009 to fulfill their requirement to implement a system that will automatically and immediately call an appropriate Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) when receiving an emergency 711 dialed call via an interconnected VoIP service.

- E911 - The FCC adopted emergency call handling requirements for internet-based relay providers. The measures will ensure that persons using internet-based relay services can quickly access emergency services. The new rules became effective May 21, 2008.

National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) – The NECA administers the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Fund.   The interstate TRS fund reimburses the telecommunication relay providers and subsidizes 51% of interstate TRS calls (Washington-to-another state) on a price-per-minute (PPM) basis.   The State of Washington's ODHH subsidizes 49% of interstate TRS calls and 100% of intrastate TRS calls (calls within Washington). The interstate TRS fund also subsidizes 100% of internet-based relay calls including internet-protocol relay, internet-protocol captioned telephone service and video relay service.

An overview of how the Washington State and NECA fund the provision of interstate and intrastate relay services based on calls made through landline telephones and wireless cellular phones but does not involve the internet:

	Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS)		Captioned Telephone Service (CTS)		Speech-to-Speech (STS)	
	NECA	ODHH	NECA	ODHH	NECA	ODHH
Interstate	51%	49%	51%	49%	51%	49%
Interstate	$1.59*	$**	$1.66*	$**	$2.73*	$**
Intrastate	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Intrastate	$0	$**	$0	$**	$0	$**

* FCC approves NECA proposed price per minute (PPM) compensation rates as of June 24, 2008 for the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009
** Proprietary information

An overview of how NECA fund the provision of internet-based relay services based on calls made through the internet and can involve landline telephones and wireless cellular phones:

	IP Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS)		Internet Protocol Relay (IP)	
	NECA	ODHH	NECA	ODHH
Interstate	100%	0%	100%	0%
Interstate	$1.66*	$0	$1.29*	$0
Intrastate	100%	0%	100%	0%
Intrastate	$1.65*	$0	$1.29*	$0

	Video Relay Service (VRS) Tier 1 0-50,000 minutes/month		Video Relay Service (VRS) Tier 2 50,001-500,000 minutes/month		Video Relay Service (VRS) Tier 3 500,001+ minutes/month	
	NECA	ODHH	NECA	ODHH	NECA	ODHH
Interstate	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Interstate	$6.74	$0	$6.47	$0	$6.27	$0
Intrastate	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Intrastate	$6.74	$0	$6.47	$0	$6.27	$0

* FCC approves NECA proposed price per minute (PPM) compensation rates as of June 24, 2008 for the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

The price-per-minute (PPM) is significantly higher than telephone calls conducted across landline and wireless telephones using traditional telecommunication relay services. All telecommunication providers including landlines, wireless, cable, VOIP providers are required to contribute funding toward the interstate TRS fund. This contribution fulfills the telecommunication providers' obligation to provide relay services as a mechanism to simplify the implementation complexity of the ADA Title IV mandate and regulations.

The telecommunication providers contribute funding based on a formula called the "carrier contribution factor". The carrier contribution factor is calculated by dividing the Fund size by total interstate common carrier end-user revenues. As of June 24, 2008, based on these PPM rates, the FCC approved a Fund size requirement of approximately $805.5 million and a carrier contribution factor of 0.01012. It is one percentage (1%) of the revenue.

States' Role with Internet-based Relay Services – In the beginning, the FCC has ruled that the Internet-protocol relay (IP), the Video Relay Service (VRS), and internet-protocol captioned telephone service (IP-CTS) on the internet platform are eligible for 100% subsidization of both interstate and intrastate calls from the NECA interstate TRS fund. This was due to the inability to identify the origin of calls made on the internet. There is currently no way to detect where a call is originating to determine whether it is an interstate or intrastate call. However, all this is about to change today.

The FCC has ruled that a centralized ten-digit numbering system is to be implemented by December 31, 2008 to be used by internet-based relay service providers. Ten digit numbers will be assigned to

consumers who use internet-based relay services.   Once this system is in place, the capability to identify call origination will become widespread.

With the pressure of rapid growth of internet-based relay calls and related costs, the FCC intends to shift some of the costs to the states by requiring the states to pay for these costs. While NECA continues to reimburse internet-based relay providers, it is expected that the FCC will mandate state responsibility for internet-based relay services at some point of time within the next 2 to 3 years. Once the FCC mandates internet-based services as a state responsibility it may take another 2 to 3 years for states to implement. The states' challenge is figuring out what kind of calculations to use in making forecast assumptions on how much it will cost the states until the FCC makes a ruling.

To address these challenges, legislation would be required to expand the applicability of TRS telephone surcharges to include wireless, Digital Service Line (DSL) and VOIP subscribers.   ODHH has an opportunity to introduce these issues for consideration.

A Shrinking Pool of Available Interpreters – Video Relay Service is a popular feature among the deaf communities who uses American Sign Language.   The explosive growth in Video Relay Service (VRS) has led to rapid establishment of numerous video relay call centers throughout the country.   In western Washington there are three (3) video relay call centers. These call centers are staffed with sign language interpreters.   The Video Relay Service providers has been aggressively recruiting freelance sign language interpreters from the community, enticing them with attractive salaries and benefits, relocation packages, and/or travel accommodations. Unfortunately, the country already has an existing shortage of qualified interpreters who freelance.   The employment trend of interpreters doing community interpreting moving toward video relay interpreting has heightened the shortage of interpreters available for community interpreting. As a result, many requests for interpreter services cannot be accommodated or require increasingly advance notice.   It has become a national problem. To complicate this problem, the national certifying body, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) now require college degrees as part of the certification process.   In other words, interpreters taking a test after June 30, 2009 will be required to have an Associate's Degree (AA degree).   Interpreters taking a test after June 30, 2012 will be require to have a Bachelor's degree (BA or BS degree).

Chapter 4 ● Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: A. Remove Barriers to Equal Access Opportunities to Telecommunications

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Maintain and increase usage of telecommunication services and features	• Provide telecommunication relay services and features (TRS) • Design, develop and execute annual outreach plan (TRS) • Distribute specialized telecommunication equipment (TED) • Maintain and expand videoconferencing sites, services and features (CAN)*	• Procure a TRS-CapTel relay provider by 2010 (TRS) • Increase volume of CapTel relay calls (TRS) • Achieve 80% of outreach plan deliverables (TRS) • Increase outreach activities by trainers (TED) • Increase distribution of CapTel telephones (TED) • Videoconferencing site at disability Resource Center and DSHS facilities (CAN)*
2. Pursue new and emerging telecommunication services and features	• Design and develop new deaf-blind telecommunication device (ACT)* • Expand Deafblind Relay Service or "Communication Facilitator" (CAN)* • Pilot a video remote interpreting project (SLIM)* • Prepare to provide internet-based relay services and features (TRS)	• Begin distribution of deaf-blind telecommunication device (ACT)* • Add an additional deaf-blind trainer (ACT) • Add "Communication Facilitator" services in Vancouver and Yakima (CAN)* • Procure a video remote interpreting provider (SLIM)* • Procure a telecommunication consultant (TRS)

GOAL: B. Remove Barriers to Equal Access Opportunities to DSHS Services

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Provide reasonable accommodations with auxiliary aids	• Ensure availability of sign language interpreter services (SLIM) • Design and develop an assistive listening systems delivery system (ACT) • Research, design and develop a real-time captioning services delivery system (ACT) • Design and develop a Braille printing delivery system (IRA) • Design and develop a visual magnification devices delivery system (ACT)	• Increase in the number of registered interpreters (SLIM) • Increase usage of assistive listening systems (ACT) • Procure real-time captioning service providers (ACT) • Print DSHS publications, forms and records in Braille (IRA) • Expand availability of visual magnification devices (ACT)
2. Develop DSHS employees' knowledge, skills and competency to serve people with hearing loss	• Provide Administrative Policy 7.20 training to DSHS employees (Programs) • Implement a "Sign Communication Proficiency Interview" system (SLIM) • Assess employees' sign language proficiency skills to determine eligibility for assignment pay: dual language (SLIM)	• Implement an AP 7.20 training curriculum (Programs) • Procure a SCPI provider (SLIM) • Conduct assessment of employees' sign language proficiency (SLIM)

GOAL: C. Remove Barriers to Equal Access Opportunities to Employment, Government, Businesses, Non-Profit Organizations and the Public

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Provide social and human services	Provide an array of services through Regional Service Centers to: (SHS) • Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind • Local communities including families, friends, professionals and general public • Organizations including nonprofits, employers, businesses and government	• Monitor caseload & workload baseline (SHS) • Increase technical assistance training (SHS)
2. Increase public awareness and sensitivity	• Respond to public requests for information and referrals (IRA) • Conduct outreach activities (IRA)	• Expand informational resources & materials (IRA) • Publish and distribute new publications (IRA) • Increase all publications in alternative formats & Spanish (IRA) • Host booth exhibits at events/conferences (IRA)

GOAL: D. Reinforce Strong Management to Increase Public Trust

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Improve information technology capacity to support management needs	• Maintain and update core applications, systems, and infrastructure to meet changing needs and take advantage of changes in technology (IT Team) • Enhance management of information technology using IT Portfolio Management and sound project management practices to guide decision-making and support IT governance (IT Manager)	• Implement application, file & printer, web, SQL servers with backup solutions (Network Specialist) • Increase in the number of contracts and initiatives subject to review to support management of the IT portfolio (IT Manager)
2. Improve financial planning and oversight for program integrity	• Improve budget planning process to effectively respond to the changing needs and requirements of programs (Fiscal Officer) • Improve fiscal oversight of the programs including ensuring resources are adequate and used in accordance with Strategic Plan priorities (Director) • Pursue legislation related to a TRS excise tax on wireless subscribers (Director)	• Narrow the gap between budget and actual expenditures (Fiscal Officer) • Draft annual budget in accordance to Strategic Plan strategies (Director) • Passage of legislation (Director)
3. Improve resource planning and oversight for program integrity	• Develop Administrative Policy 7.20 procedures, forms and records (ODHH) • Conduct risk assessments on new initiatives (Assistant Director) • Develop and maintain contract monitoring plans (Programs) • Develop performance based measures and outcomes (Programs) • Develop client grievance procedures (Assistant Director) • Develop vendor dispute resolution procedures (Assistant Director) • Develop client satisfaction surveys (Programs)	• AP 7.20 status report (ODHH) • Risk assessments completed (Assistant Director) • Contract monitoring plans completed (Programs) • Performance based measures implemented (Programs) • Client grievance procedures implemented (Assistant Director) • Vendor dispute resolution procedures implemented (Asst Director) • Establish baseline of client satisfaction levels (Programs)

| 4. Redesign and/or streamline existing service delivery | • Redesign and streamline TED service delivery to 'drop-ship' service delivery
• Phase out certain CAN requirements in Regional Service Centers' contracts
• Revise (WAC) administrative rules (Director, Assistant Director, TRS, TED) | • Procure a "Drop-Ship" vendor (TED)
• Requirements eliminated in new FY10 contracts (SHS)
• Rule-making process to be initiated (TED) |

GOAL: E. Strengthen Data-Driven Decision Making

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Use quality assurance system to promote satisfactory outcomes for individuals, children and families	• Research, design and implement case management best practices to improve Centers' caseload outcomes (SHS) • Create an FTE with quality assurance responsibilities (Director) • Create program-specific logic models and performance measures (TRS, TED, SHS, SLIM)	• Provide annual training to Centers' case managers (SHS) • Identify case management best practices (SHS) • Appoint applicant to a vacant FTE position (Director) • Logic models and performance measures in place (TRS, TED, SHS, SLIM)
2. Expand and leverage information technologies to improve decision-making	• Develop & implement five inter-databases under a single information system for internal and intranet usage (Database Specialist) • Overhaul design and layout of internet & intranet websites (IT Manager) • Implement Jump Tree project/communication software to improve decision-making and communication processes (IT Team)	• TED, SHS, SLIM data modules are developed and integrated into a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Information System (Database Specialist) • New internet & intranet websites (IT Manager) • Jump Tree is being used (ODHH)

GOAL: F. Value and Develop Employees

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Hire, motivate, and retain a positive, respectful, productive, richly diverse and culturally competent workforce	• Map the e-recruiting process and identify places to lessen the impact and time needed for hiring new employees (Executive Assistant) • Implement ODHH action plan created in response to employee survey issues (Director) • Hire consultant to improve communications & performance through coaching and mentoring (Director) • Develop and implement ODHH workforce plan (Executive Assistant) • Develop and implement individualized training plan (Executive Assistant)	• Decrease in the time to fill permanent funded vacant positions (Executive Assistant)8 • Increase in the employee survey ratings on related questions (Director) • Consultant to be hired (Director) • ODHH workforce plan in place (Executive Assistant) • Increase in the percent of employees who completed mandatory DSHS & core competencies training (Executive Assistant)
2. Appropriately deploy the workforce in alignment with DSHS goals and values and reinforce good performance	• Supervisors to provide timely & appropriate performance expectations and evaluations for each employee (Supervisors) • Recruit and retain a diverse and culturally competent workforce that closely matches the diversity of DSHS clients (Director) • Create innovative ways to recognize employees' success (Management)	• Increase in the percent of employees with current performance expectations (Supervisors) • Appoint a qualified hard of hearing applicant (Director) • Employee recognition activities in place (Director, Assistant Director)

GOAL: G. Improve Internal and External Partnerships

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services and its' outcomes by strengthening partnerships within DSHS, with state agencies, with community partners to expand integrated service programs	• Interpreting - Collaborate with DSHS Limited English Proficiency coordinators and stakeholders on interpreter services contract • Court Interpreting – Collaborate with Administrator of the Courts, WA State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and interpreters on establishing court interpreting standards and rates • Mental Health – Collaborate with stakeholders and the Mental Health Transformation Work Group to promote standards of care in the mental health infrastructure and service delivery • Deaf-Blind - Collaborate with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Services for the Blind and stakeholders via a deaf-blind task force to identify and close gaps • Early Intervention – Collaborate with DSHS Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program, Washington Sensory Disability Services, Department of Health on closing service gaps • Emergency Management - Collaborate with DSHS and Office of Emergency Management on disaster preparedness and notification plan • Independent Living – Collaborate with Statewide Independent Living Council and independent living centers to promote access opportunities to services offered by the Regional Service Centers • Employment - Collaborate with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services Department-Work Source and Regional Service Centers that advance to progress toward employment	• Interpreting - Increase in the number of contract improvements • Court Interpreting – Established court interpreting standards and rates • Mental Health – Reestablish mental health professionals workgroup and implement mental health standard of care for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind • Deaf-Blind – Deaf-Blind Task Force to be established • Early Intervention – Increase in Regional Service Centers – Family Resource Coordinator collaboration activities at local levels • Emergency Management - A feasible emergency management initiative to be identified • Independent Living – Increase in availability of independent living center facilities where Regional Service Centers does not have an office or facility in Everett, Redmond, Ellensburg and Longview • Employment - Increase in Regional Service Centers – Work Source - DVR collaboration activities at local levels
2. Address the disproportionally and disparate impact in client services	• Add hard of hearing specialists at Regional Service Centers to serve underrepresented hard of hearing populations (SHS) • Contract with DBSC to provide statewide client services to deaf-blind individuals in collaboration with Regional Service Centers (SHS) • Recruit person(s) of ethnicity to represent on the ODHH advisory committee (Director)	• Secure additional funding for hard of hearing specialists through policy-level decision-making process (SHS) • Secure additional funding for statewide deaf-blind specialist through policy-level decision-making process (SHS) • A person(s) of ethnicity will be representing the ethnic community on the advisory committee (Director)
3. Strengthen partnerships with Tribes to improve service delivery capacities	• Work with Tribes to identify Native Americans with hearing loss and conduct a needs assessment and develop strategies to serve them (SHS) • Work with Tribes to identify a feasible approach to conduct outreach about telecommunication services (TRS)	• A needs assessment report to be submitted (SHS) • A Tribal outreach plan to Native Americans to be submitted (TRS)

* ODHH Strategies-Performance Measures identified in DSHS Strategic Plan pg 21

Chapter 5 • Performance Assessment

GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

State initiatives such as Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) and State Auditor Office authority to do performance-based audits have heightened the need to review how ODHH conduct performance assessments. ODHH is an expected participant in the DSHS GMAP sessions by 2009.   The existing logic models and performance based outcomes will be overhauled.   With the recent establish of the DSHS Planning, Performance and Accountability and its' consultancy team, ODHH immediately began receiving technical assistance.   ODHH logic models based on its mandates and authority have been developed.   The next step is to develop program-level logic models and performance based outcomes & measures. The second step is to develop meaningful reports that demonstrate how the programs are performing.   ODHH intend to hold internal GMAP forums with the Deputy Secretary before participating in the DSHS GMAP sessions.

AUDITS AND REVIEWS

Internal Audits - Operation Review & Consultation (OCR) did internal audits of client service contracts with a few Regional Service Centers during 2005.   ODHH has since acted upon the recommendations. Recently, OCR did an internal audit of ODHH practices in handling receipts of personal checks from clients contributing toward the cost of specialized telecommunication equipment.   ODHH has since acted upon the recommendations.

Independent Audits - The State Auditor Office (SAO) did a 2005 audit of the client service contract with one of the Regional Service Centers.   While no audit findings had been issued, ODHH took proactive steps to address issues related to indirect costs reimbursement.

Internal Reviews - DSHS executive management reviews ODHH fiscal management via Monthly Fiscal Status Report (MFSR) meetings.   Despite lack of audits in recent years and the ongoing need for risk assessment, ODHH uses the annual Risk Assessment and Self Evaluation (RASE) to identify areas of best practices needing improvement and take proactive steps.

CLOSING PERFORMANCE GAPS

There are several DSHS activities that ODHH participate in including the Agency Self-Assessment, Employee Survey and the Client Satisfaction Survey. These activities are tools to identify and close performance gaps. ODHH use the Agency Self-Assessment results to identify ODHH strengths and opportunities. ODHH use the employee survey to review themes including management, communication, personnel, resources, job characteristics, co-workers and other topics. ODHH currently has two client satisfaction surveys.   One survey assesses client satisfaction with the contracted trainers of the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program. The other new survey will assess client satisfaction with the Centers' provision of case management services. ODHH will be establishing baselines to measure future client satisfaction levels.

Chapter 6 • Internal Capacity Assessment

ORGANIZATIONAL AND WORKFORCE CAPACITY

ODHH has unique business needs to serve a unique population.   The last five years, ODHH has made improvement in aligning workforce capacity with its' business needs. This was achieved through a reorganization effort; changing positions and creating several new ones. With these changes, management and staff acknowledge ODHH is undergoing a transition within an organizational life cycle from 'creativity' to 'direction' phases. The 'direction' phase is creating a cultural shift with productivity alignment at organizational level (strategic plan) and individual level (staff growth and choices).   ODHH will seek coaching assistance in managing this organizational transition.

ODHH is the smallest agency within DSHS.   During Fall of 2003, ODHH had fourteen (14) positions including three (3) staff with hearing loss.   Today, ODHH has seventeen (17) positions including seven (7) staff with hearing loss, closing the disparity gap between employment and client services. However, the need to appoint a hard of hearing person still exists.   This past year, ODHH has appointed two new staff to complete a three-member Information Technology (IT) team initiative to address technology capacity.

A 5-year workforce growth plan is slow and conservative. It includes prospective new positions addressing office management coordination, policy-quality assurance initiatives and additional secretarial support for program managers. A staffing model is needed to reassess workload and staff deployment. None of the staff will retire within five years, making succession planning a low priority.

ODHH has identified as a workforce barrier, the small pool of available candidates with specialized skills in a niche service delivery and having sign language proficiency. Another workforce barrier is the maintaining the retention of staff in four (4) clerical and secretarial positions with the highest turnover rate.   Retention in these positions have stabilized in recent years however, turnover is to be expected as staff seek professional opportunities.

With the initial ODHH reorganization completed, the management and staff recognized additional training to improve the skill set and core competencies has become a high priority. Other priorities include alignment of strategic plan accountability with staff performance evaluations as well as developing an ODHH 'Workforce Development Plan.'

TECHNOLOGY CAPACITY

Historically, ODHH has had to rely on another DSHS agency to provide Information Technology (IT) services. With the recent establishment of a three-member Information Technology (IT) team this past year; ODHH can aggressively improve technology capacity, transitioning from office technology to information technology.   The transition will require greater connectivity to DSHS Information System Services Division (ISSD) and the Department of Information System (DIS) as part of the State Government Network (SGN).
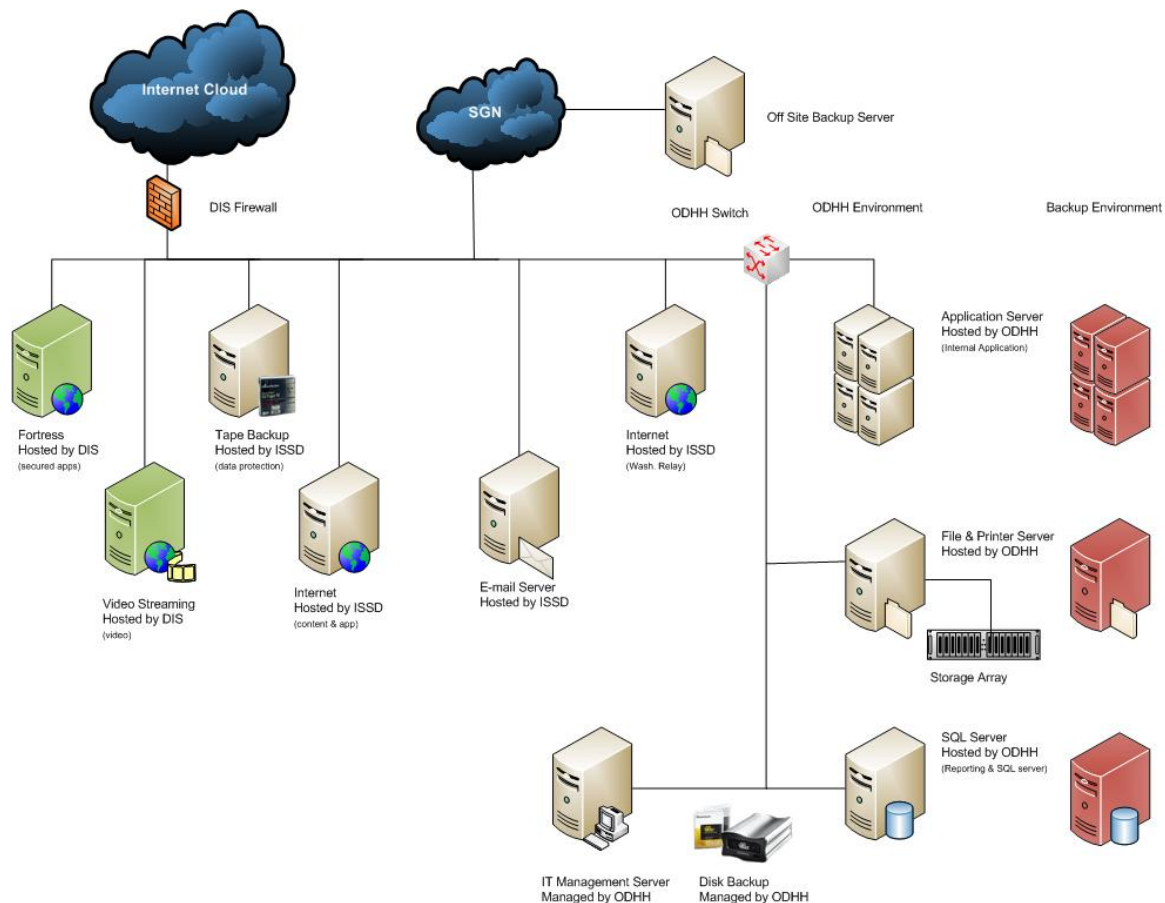
The immediate challenge is the lack of a comprehensive management and data information system to meet performance and accountability requirement as well as IT standards. Several recent activities is the successful installation of Jump Tree, a management and project communication software tool, pursuit of server solutions, and temporary database solutions. Critical needs include security, web development, database(s) development, data retention & security and infrastructure support. An ODHH-IT Strategic Plan has been drafted and incorporates the following elements:

- IT functions: web development, network, technical support, and database
- IT administration: staff, policies and portfolio management
- IT hardware and software: purchasing standards and software licenses
- IT applications: web development & database(s)
- Videoconferencing technologies and features

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

The "Telecommunications Devices for the Hearing and Speech Impaired Account" or "Fund 540" is used to fiscally manage Program 100 (ODHH - 'appropriated') and Program 850 (Telecommunication Access Service - 'non-appropriated'). The budget operates annually on a fiscal year basis, e.g. July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009 (FY09) and any excess revenue over expenditures are carried over to the next fiscal year. The revenue is based upon the number of landlines which has been declining. With the current economic climate, it is not clear what will be the impact on subscribers' ability to afford monthly telephone bills and whether disconnections will occur. The declining economy in 2002-2003 saw a 3.5%

reduction in the number of landlines. At the same time, TRS expenditures have been declining due to the user movement from traditional relay services to internet-based relay services. This results in under-expenditures.   Due to the under-expenditures, despite decreasing landlines and excise taxes, ODHH is experiencing a short period of excess reserves in the fund until the FCC mandate states pay for the costs of internet-based relay services.

Revenue

The revenue source for Fund 540 is through TRS telephone excise taxes.   The telephone excise tax is based on "switched access lines" (telephone landlines).   The current monthly excise tax rate per switched access line is .12 cents. Each .01 cent excise tax reduction represents approximately $400k in revenue reduction depending on the number of landlines and excise tax rate at the time of the decrease. ODHH could recommend excise tax increases up to a cap at .19 cents per line per month. However, the strategy is to maintain at .12 cents with existing landlines.

Recent historical data indicate a 3% average annual decrease in the total number of landlines. The historical decline in landlines reflects the national trend of landline telephone subscribers switching to wireless cellular telephones.   The declining number of landlines represents a shrinking excise tax base. ODHH does not have the statutory authority to collect surcharges on wireless, digital or broadband lines.

Number of Land Line

	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09
	42,550,550	41,065,993	42,785,303	42,196,355	40,690,760	38,486,778	39,750,000	38,830,275
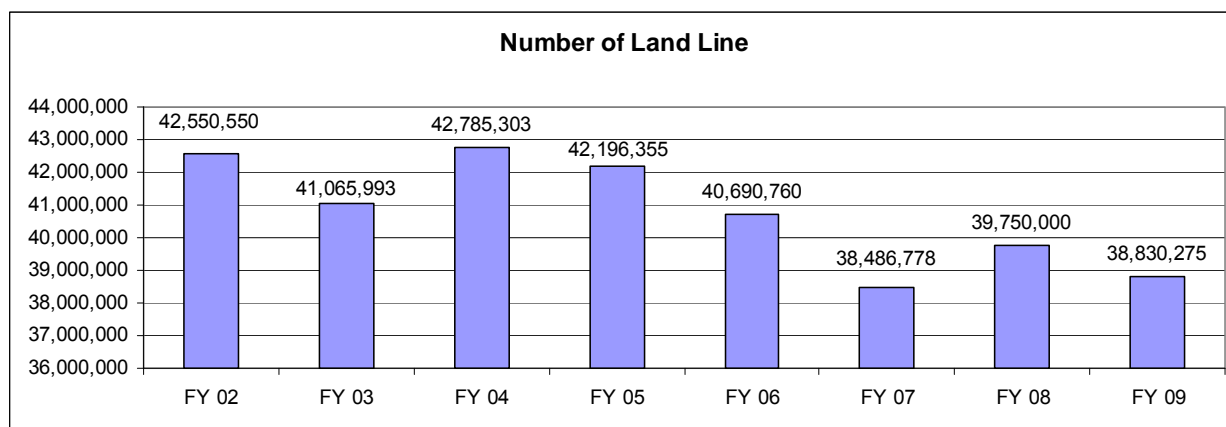
*FY08-FY09 Department of Revenue (DOR) estimates

The following table is the number of land lines reported with the fiscal year excise tax rate:

Collection Agency	Fiscal Year	Number of Land Lines	% ↕	Excise Tax
DSHS	FY02	42,550,550	2.6%↓	.14 ¢
DSHS	FY03	41,065,993	3.5%↓	.14 ¢
DSHS	FY04	42,785,303	4.2%↑	.14 ¢
DOR*	FY05	42,196,355	1.4%↓	.13 ¢
DOR	FY06	40,690,760	3.6%↓	.10 ¢
DOR	FY07	38,486,778	5.4%↓	.09 ¢
DOR	FY08	-	-	.12 ¢

* per 2004 Legislative session, Department of Revenue (DOR) authorized to be collection agency

Expenditures

ODHH annual budget is aligned with goals, objectives and strategies and the following chart demonstrates in percentages where the FY09 budget dollars will go:

ODHH FY09 Budget

- Salaries & Benefits
- Administration*
- (TRS) Telecommunication Relay Services
- (TED) Telecommunication Equipment Distribution
- (CAN) Communication Access Network
- (SHS) Social & Human Services
- (ACT) Assistive Communication Technology
- (SLIM) Sign Language Interpreter Management
- (IRA) Information Referral Advocacy

1% SLIM
1% IRA
3% ACT
12% SHS
2% CAN
15% TED
19% Salaries & Benefits
7% Administration
39% TRS

The following table is based on actual revenue and expenditures during a fiscal year:

Actual Revenue & Expenditures

Fiscal Year	Program 850 Non-Appropriated		Program 100 Appropriated	Total Expenditures	Fund 540 Ending Balance**
	Revenue	Expenditures	Expenditures		
FY02	5,950,641	5,770,754	873,258	6,644,012	
FY03	5,750,187	5,326,619	888,378	6,214,997	
FY04	5,989,942	4,100,631	891,000	4,991,631	
FY05*	6,052,981	3,483,063	884,618	4,367,681	
FY06*	4,639,294	3,600,876	891,781	4,492,657	
FY07*	3,681,301	3,644,847	894,442	4,539,289	$5,732,606

*per 2004 session, DSHS authorized to collect underpayment retroactively. Total collected $1,004,934
** As of June 30, 2007

Cost Pressures

The excess reserves in the fund balance will be depleted when the Federal Communication

Commission decides to shift the cost burden to the states, paying for the costs of internet-based relay services.   Slow growth of increasing CapTel relay services as CapTel telephones are distributed would eventually offset the decline in text telephone (TTY) usage of telecommunication relay services.

Unless the excise tax base includes wireless, digital and broadband lines, ODHH would have to begin surcharge increases up to the surcharge cap of .19 cents and budgetary cutbacks. For the interim, the reserves are needed for future FCC mandates on the subsidization and/or provision of internet-based relay services

A Referendum 37 mandate back in 1980s provided a rent-free infrastructure of facilities serving people with disabilities for twenty years through local level agreements between local nonprofits and local agencies.   A Tacoma-based regional service center was one of such facilities.   However, it has since been replaced with Seattle-based provider opening a Tacoma office.   The provider has to pay a market-rate lease which it cannot afford to maintain with the current funding level.   Generally, funding levels for all of the regional service centers have slowly increased over the years but has not kept up with inflation, clients' needs and increasing gas prices given that Centers serve large regions.   Demands to increase the funding levels would have to be addressed.

Cost Reduction Strategies

Conservative expenditure controls being practiced today will lessen the impact of any budgetary cutbacks in the future.   ODHH will be implementing a cost reduction strategy and will continue to explore other possible cost reduction strategies.   Cost reduction strategies are a high priority due to the expectation that someday ODHH will begin paying for internet-based relay services.

Communication Access Network - The regional service centers (Social and Human Services) have contractual requirements related to Communication Access Network (CAN) as part of the client services. These requirements include presentations and video site implementations.   However, there are challenges with Centers ability to meet the required number of video site implementation including inadequate number of trained technicians and duplication by the video relay service industry. It has resulted in an inefficient use of resources and most of the requirements will be phased out along with funding reduction. Funding will be reduced from $106,050 in FY09 to approximately $21,000 in FY10.   ODHH intend to maintain existing public video sites in Center facilities to allow those who cannot afford monthly broadband charges to access video relay services. This cost reduction strategy will realize an eighty percent (80%) savings.

SERVICE DELIVERY CAPACITY

Analysis of the service delivery capacity will focus on the three largest programs that make up 66% of the budget:

Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) – Washington remains a national leader in the pursuit of equal access opportunities to telecommunications.   The cutting edge implementation of communication facilitators to enable deaf-blind to access video relay services is one example of what ODHH is currently doing to provide equal access opportunity. Another example is the research, design and production of specialized telecommunication equipment for deaf-blind to make telephone or relay calls. The addition of captioned telephone service (i.e. CapTel) as a TRS feature benefits the hard of hearing. In the past, TRS activities were performed by ODHH management.   Today, a full time

program manager is more responsive to the fast changing TRS industry.

However, the national migration of deaf users from text telephone (TTY) and 'traditional' relay services to videophones; video relay service and internet-protocol relay service result in a continuing decline in TTY and TRS usage. Captioned telephone service growth is too slow despite initial concerns the call volume would see a rapid growth. The greatest challenge is there are too many uncertainties on how the states will be expected to manage and regulate the internet-based relay industry with more questions than answers. The FCC minimum standards are based on the traditional TRS and inadequately apply them to internet-based relay services. Consultancy is needed to identify minimum standards and ODHH need to prepare for internet-based relay service procurement and contract(s) accordingly.

Telecommunication Equipment Distribution – Washington is the national envy by most states' distribution programs due to a customer-focused approach offered by contracted trainers. Trainers schedule appointments, deliver and set up telecommunication equipment connections and provide ongoing trouble-shooting. Most trainers serve a niche population focusing on deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind. Additionally, ODHH contracts with two organizations to serve speech disabled clients in Eastern and Western Washington regions. This approach makes sure the equipment is being used by clients effectively.

There is a need to shorten the turn-around time from initial receipt date of applications to clients receiving the equipment, seek alternatives to on-site equipment storage, and minimize the burden of processing clients' personal checks based on an income sliding scale and equipment exchanges. An unreliable legacy database holds back efforts to address processes and need to be replaced. A new database would improve reporting requirements and streamline processes for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

ODHH conducted a comprehensive analysis of other states' equipment distribution delivery systems to determine which approach would produce the greatest cost-saving measures. Such delivery systems include traditional, voucher, drop-ship models. For example, the drop-ship model allows off-site storage of equipment which would save considerable staff time. ODHH is leaning toward a drop-ship model but implementation will be on hold until a new database is operational.

Social and Human Services - Historically, ODHH had to deal with several Centers' crises or disputes. As such unfortunate events occurred; ODHH had to replace three providers in Bellingham, Seattle and Tacoma. Today, one provider in western Washington with three offices achieves cost savings and more underserved and underrepresented clients are being served. With the exception of high turnover in the Board of one Center, Centers have achieved greater stability. Relations and the partnership with all Centers have dramatically improved.

ODHH has selected to review Centers' case management practices and focusing on how to measure the number of clients served. There was no reporting of actual persons receiving actual services nor could ODHH identify the trends in caseloads. As a result, in FY06, ODHH initiated a new reporting requirement to identify these clients. Additionally, ODHH began providing annual training with speakers for all Centers' case managers. This Fall, ODHH and the Regional Service Centers with Office of Planning, Performance and Accountability assistance will be collaborating to develop logic models, performance based outcomes and measurements. It is the goal to use a case management best practice model, document outcomes and measures and improve tracking of caseload-workload trends. In the future, the scope of services will place heavier emphasis on direct client services.

This document is also available electronically at: www1.dshs.wa.gov/strategic

Persons with disabilities may request
a hard copy by contacting DSHS at:
360.902.7800, or TTY: 800.422.7930.

Questions about the strategic planning
process may be directed to DSHS Constituent
Services at:
1.800.737.0617.

Washington State
**Department of Social and Health
Services**
P.O. Box 45010
Olympia, WA 98504-5010
www.wa.gov/dshs